



# QUEST

ISSUE 4 2018

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## Jailed for pawsession

It's the start of the working day at Mobilong prison and inmates are heading off to spend the day in the bakery, the laundry, the assembly workshop or the gardens. A lucky few begin and end their day at the kennels, caring for and training retired greyhounds before they are adopted into a suitable home.

'Their first job is to clean the kennels, then do a training session, feed and take the dogs for a walk around the oval or to visit other buildings in the prison to get them used to meeting different people. They do the same again in the afternoons before putting the dogs in for the night. It's a full time job 7 days a week,' says Gill Rogers, Greyhound Racing SA prison program officer.

Gill has 40 years experience in training dogs and has been working at Mobilong for just over a year. But she spends more time training the inmates than the dogs. 'Eighty to ninety per cent of dog training is training of their owners or handlers,' Gill says.

'The dogs learn how to socialise with people and the handlers learn how to train and socialise an animal.' Kit Lian Wong, general manager, Mobilong Prison

Prison inmates have to learn what can be unfamiliar skills. 'The handlers have to have the patience and the understanding to help the dog make the transition and learn what behaviour is expected.'

For the dogs there's a lot of learning to do. Greyhounds that have spent their lives as racing or breeding dogs haven't experienced the life of a domestic pet. Their contact with humans has been limited and they're used to an often unstimulating and regulated environment. The sights, sounds and smells that house dogs are used to can make greyhounds anxious and stressed.

'They have to learn how to live life outside of a kennel. There are so many day-to-day things that they have never experienced, such as walking in traffic or walking through glass doors. TVs are alien to them, as are microwaves or food always being around and available. Their lives have been highly regulated so simple things like being able to lie quietly on a bed while things happen around them, walking loosely on a lead, or coming when they're called – many have never learned their own name – are all new and unfamiliar, and potentially frightening for them.'

Caring for and training the greyhounds can be a steep learning curve for their handlers. 'As a dog trainer I know how to use positive reinforcement methods with animals

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lifewide learning  
for all Australians*

# Message from the CEO



The Year of Lifelong Learning allowed us to re-focus on a policy area that has languished and highlight the importance of funding ACE at a national level.

The National Year of Lifelong Learning was initiated by Adult Learning Australia to position lifelong learning as the centrepiece of all education policies. But we have a far grander vision that extends beyond education alone.

We want a systematic and integrated approach to lifelong learning that enriches and builds an inclusive learning society. One that values and respects difference and empowers people to reach their full potential. This integrated approach would include a strong commitment to adult and community education (ACE). It has now been 10 long years since the last Ministerial Declaration on ACE. And even though the finish line remains out of sight we know that building something worthwhile requires hard work and, yes, doggedness.

To reinvigorate discussion on the role and relevance of lifelong learning in Australia, we embarked on a range of initiatives. Our National Summit, [From Ideal To Real – Towards A National Lifelong Learning Policy For Australia](#) brought together representatives from industry, adult education, welfare, government and academia to engage in a national conversation and identify the best way forward. We published a series of short [commentaries](#) to tackle contemporary issues in adult and lifelong learning from diverse points of view and from differing social, economic, political and cultural perspectives. We have also published a special edition of the [Australian Journal of Adult Learning](#), which provides national and international perspectives on lifelong learning across a range of areas. We finished the year with a lifelong learning forum at RMIT, which allowed us to reflect on #YOLL2018 and commit to continuing this work in 2019.

So, while we are yet to see a lifelong learning revolution take place, it is heartening to note when there is national recognition.

In her address at the launch of Adult Learners Week Minister For Small And Family Business, Skills and Vocational Education, Senator The Hon Michaelia Cash, said that, 'Adult learning changes lives not simply by skilling a labour force, but by connecting people with communities, boosting confidence, building self-esteem and by making people more adaptable to changes in the workforce and in our communities'.

More recently, Tanya Plibersek, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Education and Training recognised the crucial role adult education plays in overcoming disadvantage. 'Our education system must continue to have a strong, high quality adult and community education sector if we are to ensure no one gets left behind.'

While state and territory government commitment to lifelong learning and ACE varies widely across Australia, it is clear that community commitment continues with enrolments in formal and informal adult and community education courses in cities and towns, rural and remote areas across the country.

The Year of Lifelong Learning has provided momentum for ALA members and others working in ACE to focus on and highlight the impact of their work with adult learners, many of which we share with you in social media and in *Quest*.

Of course, there is more work to do and ALA must continue to step up with the sector to show how learning can transform lives and how it is an essential feature of a healthy active democracy.

Our campaign for a Ministerial Declaration on ACE and a National Lifelong Learning Policy is ongoing and will be taken into 2019 as part of our program leading up to the next Federal election.

In closing #YOLL2018, I wish you all the best for the festive season. I hope that you have a chance to enjoy good company, share stories and music, experience the beauty and mystery of nature and sample some delicious home made food with your family and friends.

Jenny Macaffer  
CEO



Photo: Hound In Hand photography

(story continued from p. 1)

but if you are someone who hasn't experienced that kind of teaching in your own life, it's something you have to learn.

'A lot of these guys have experienced abusive backgrounds and a lot of negative reinforcement. With the dogs, they have to learn to focus on good behaviour rather than bad.

'They have to learn to be patient and to take things slowly, to put in time with the dog and to reward behaviour they want to encourage rather than punishing behaviour that's inappropriate.

'They have to develop an empathy with the dog and pay close attention to the dog's body language so they can understand what the dog is feeling and how to respond in a way that relieves the dog's stress and anxiety, and make it feel safe. Because the dog won't learn anything if it's not calm. For many of the men it's a completely new way of interacting.'

The inmates are diligent. 'The benefit of working with prisoners is that you have a captive audience who have time to be dedicated to training whereas outside prison you are working with people whose everyday life interrupts their dog training. So it's much more intensive,' Gill says.

Not surprisingly, the men care deeply for the dogs they look after. 'It's important that prisoners don't over attach to a dog, and all of them have a strong affection for their animal so they have to be prepared for the dog to leave.

'We prepare them from the beginning for the separation. They all know their time with the dog will be short. And saying goodbye to the first dog is the hardest. They put so much into it. In a male prison no one shows their feelings much but I've seen men who are not afraid to yell "I love you" in tears as the dog is leaving.

'The prisoners involved are always telling me about what a huge difference the dog training has made to the way they feel about themselves; how it helps them take their minds

'Once a dog is gone the men all want feedback on how the dog is doing in their new life, they really love that. They keep the cards and pictures of their dogs after they've gone.' Gill Rogers, Greyhound Racing SA prison program officer

off their problems. They often tell me how they experience feelings of success and pride and how being able to make a difference to the dog's life makes them feel really good about themselves.'

The staff notice it too. 'Prison social workers and education officers are very supportive of the program because they see the differences in demeanour and mental health in the handlers. And that improvement starts the moment the dog walks into the prison and is handed to its new handler,' Gill says.

In its first year of operation, 29 dogs have been successfully adopted out to new homes and there's a waiting list of prisoners who want to get involved.

Kit Lian Wong, general manager of the prison says the presence of the dogs affects everyone in the prison. 'You can see how successful the program is in everyday interactions, it really instils a sense of normality and calm to have the dogs around. Ours is an open campus, so prisoners are free to roam with their dogs so having people walking around with their dogs makes it feel like a community. Other prisoners stop to pat the dog, and so do the staff. So it really increases social interaction and creates a neighbourhood feel.

'We had one dog called Zeppo who was uncontrollable at first. He couldn't walk past other dogs without becoming aggressive, he would grab food off the table and wouldn't respond to commands. But he's been a real success story. Now he works as a therapy dog at an aged care home on the Eyre Peninsula.

'Prisoners report that looking after a dog gives them a sense of purpose, something to wake up for each day. The dogs give them unconditional love and that has a big impact on prisoners' self esteem. You can really see the change in them.

'Fostering an animal is a journey that the prisoners and the dogs go through together. The men who are selected for the program have to be professional and respectful, they learn life skills about how to socialise and associate with others. In taking on the responsibility to look after a dog each day they establish a routine. For all of them it's an opportunity to try something completely different and they learn more about themselves as a result.'

Cover photo: Chris Beck

# Women at the wheel

Graduates from Australia's first women-only trucking course are hitting the highway on their way to new careers in transport and logistics.



## Katie Annetta is one of eight newly licenced truck drivers to graduate from Australia's first women-only driver training program.

Katie and her fellow drivers-in-training completed the Superior Heavy Licensing Program for Women – an intensive four-week course that aims to attract more women into the driver's seat and to improve truck safety. The program is an initiative between Wodonga TAFE's Driver Education Centre of Australia (DECA), Transport Women Australia (TWA), LinFox, Australia Post and Volvo, who supplied a prime mover for the students to gain experience behind the wheel.

It was a chance conversation with a friend that first got Katie thinking about truck driving. 'A mate who is a garbo said having a heavy truck licence is great because you do deliveries or drive a forklift, you can do heaps of different things with it and go to a whole bunch of different places.'

After six years as a postie with Australia Post, the job was starting to pall. 'I wanted a change. I wasn't getting any job satisfaction and I was really unhappy about it.'

'I'm the sort of person who's always looking to better myself. After I finished high school, I trained and worked as a chef. After a while of working I decided to do the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment because I thought that I'd like to get involved in training.'

After applying for the course and being interviewed, Katie was thrilled to be offered a place.

**'I really recommend it, it's a really good experience to challenge yourself and get out of your comfort zone and do something different with your life.'** Katie Annetta

'I was rapt, really excited.' Like the rest of her classmates, Katie had never driven a truck before she enrolled in the course.

But excitement turned to dismay once it was her turn to go for her first drive.

'It was really daunting at the start. You're in a massive truck and it's overwhelming. The first time I got behind the wheel I was like "Let me out, this is just too much." The fact that it was manual didn't help either.'

'But then I just said to myself, "I have a mortgage to pay and I have just got to do this".'

The intensive course covered theory, practical training, mechanical appreciation and assessment and was run at Linfox in Melbourne's Laverton.

'The trainers were great, really amazing. They were there to answer all our questions and give us encouragement. They acknowledged our feelings about driving such a big vehicle. One trainer shared how his brother had died out driving a truck. They were like big daddies to us.'

Representatives from Transport Women Australia offered mentoring in topics as diverse as dealing with sexism in a male dominated industry, to tips for mapping female friendly facilities on transport routes.

'The training was very practical and we got great experience behind the wheel. We'd go out in a truck as a passenger with a more experienced driver, it could be male or female so you could watch and learn from what they were doing as well as having a chance to practise yourself. It was great having the chance to do that.'

Then came the test – a 90 minute drive in and around Shepparton. 'It was challenging because you have to watch out for the way you take corners, make sure you've got enough room at roundabouts, and enough leeway not to hit the gutter.'



Back at Australia Post, Katie has found her transition to her new role has been smooth and as a female truck driver she got a warm welcome. 'I just can't fault them, everyone's been really positive and encouraging.'

'The first time you get behind the wheel after you get your licence is daunting. You hear of a lot of accidents. So you have to be aware without letting it undermine your confidence.'

'I've been driving on my own for 5-6 weeks and it's good now. I drive from Sunshine along a route that takes me to Somerton, Derrimut, Tullamarine and beyond, loading and unloading and doing deliveries on busy roads and in heavy traffic in an 8 ton truck. It doesn't quite feel like second nature yet but I'm getting there. It was just the change I needed and I'm really enjoying it.'

'I've got big plans. My partner and I are building another house so we might even need a second mortgage. Not that I'm earning more than before, I'm earning less. But I'm much happier. It's not all about the money.'

'My future plans are to become a trainer and assessor at Australia Post. I feel my career prospects are good as a driver and I've put my hand up to assist with the next training course that's offered.'

Currently 98% of Australian truck drivers are men with the average age of 47. This ageing workforce, combined with growing demand is contributing to the shortage of eligible drivers and putting pressure on companies like Linfox, Australia Post and Volvo to look at ways to attract more women into the heavy transport sector.

James Dixon, General Manager Transport & Aviation at Australia Post says, 'It's important to make sure that we remove the roadblocks that prevent talented people from joining the industry. We value diversity and appreciate the benefits an inclusive workplace brings to our customers, our business, and most importantly, our people.'

Simon Macaulay, National Manager Transport at Wodonga TAFE's DECA says, 'All eight women graduated with their licences and word has gotten round about the success of the program. We've had a huge response from industry with 5 or 6 companies wanting the courses to run in February next year.'



**'There's a serious driver shortage so it's all hands on deck with a whole lot of people in the industry collaborating to find ways to get more women onboard.'** Simon Macaulay, DECA, Wodonga TAFE

# Photos give refugees a voice

A Western Australian project that encourages refugee women to take photos to document and share their experiences is giving them a say into policies that affect their lives.



**Language barriers, isolation, health problems and discrimination are just some of the obstacles that can make it difficult for refugee women to have a say into resettlement policies that directly affect them. But a Western Australian research project is changing all that.**

Research leader Jaya Dantas, Professor of International Health Sciences at Curtin University and her team used Photovoice with refugee women to capture and reflect on their experiences of settling in Australia.

Funded by Healthway, Professor Dantas and her team partnered with Mirrabooka-based Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre to recruit 45 women, aged 25–65, from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Vietnam, South Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Lebanon and El Salvador.

After training by a professional photographer, the women took a series of photos to represent aspects of their lives before and after arriving in Australia.

Sharing their photos with the group and composing captions allowed the women to articulate their experiences in ways they hadn't done before.

'The experience of coming together with a range of people from different countries to talk about the pictures they have taken and what they represent about life back then and life now is very powerful. Reflecting on what the picture meant

'It's very easy to do household surveys or questionnaires which are anonymous but you don't know who said what, it's so impersonal. Often in projects participants' voices are lost, presented in graphs and pie charts that only educated people can understand.' Jaya Dantas, Professor of International Health Sciences at Curtin University

and creating a narrative for it increased their self-awareness. One woman shared a photo of herself driving a car and described how the day she got her licence as "the best day of my life". It really brought home to her how she had learned new skills, was more able to participate, and showed how she wouldn't have to be dependent on others.

'Women don't want to be dependent, but the whole process of writing a resume, going for an interview, looking for a job is overwhelming. However, many women felt accepted and welcomed in multicultural Australia too, saying, "Life here makes me stronger than I was before",' Professor Dantas says.

The diverse group of women identified common barriers – feelings of isolation, physical and mental health issues, and difficulty finding work – to draw up a set of policy recommendations for supporting successful settlement. Their recommendations included tailored English language programs, support for finding work, building social cohesion and assistance from settled migrants.

Photovoice challenges traditional quantitative research methods used by experts and policy makers. Engaging people whose voices are often unheard in recording and sharing their expertise to help shape decisions that will affect their lives can be a powerful learning experience, Professor Dantas says.

'It was a transformative experience for the women involved, they learned so much in the process, developing new confidence in a safe and supported environment where we provided child care and translators so they could participate.

'As well as learning new skills the women made new friends and really loved the experience.'

Around half of the women opted to include their photos and accompanying stories in a travelling exhibition to all libraries in WA to raise community awareness of refugee women's experiences. The exhibition highlights the challenges they face living in Australia, the importance of family and social support, the need for education and employment and the personal strength they need to draw on during resettlement.



'Light makes me feel safe. War took all the light from our lives. We used this light to survive and hold us together.'



'My son is going to the library. It is important to me because in my country it was not possible for children to go safely to the library or school. In Australia, my children can have the opportunity to be educated, which is something I did not have. I enjoy being part of my son's school.'



'I love this photo because I got [my] licence. I feel confident when I drive, not like before I just I feel I depend on myself.'



'Adjusting in other country or culture is a hard process but once the process is over those hard moments become shadows (memories).'



'From my first look I saw a very big, strong tree. I drew strength from this one. I saw the branches as different opportunities and pathways for me.'

## Photovoice and adult education

Photovoice can be a powerful tool for working with people whose needs are often ignored to gain some sense of control over their lives and to prompt change.

Photovoice offers:

- an alternative means of expression particularly useful for people with low literacy or limited language skills
- a non threatening way for people to express feelings and experiences and to record and reflect on what is important to them
- a fun and creative means of self expression
- an effective tool for advocacy – images can make a more powerful case for change to policy and decision makers than words alone
- an engaging means of documenting a process or gathering data for an evaluation.

## Join now

Being a member of ALA is a great way to support lifelong and lifewide learning in Australia and join a thriving national network of adult educators. As a member of ALA, we champion the work you do; develop policies; conduct research and provide professional development to ensure a vibrant, valued and visible adult and community education sector.

To find out more about all the benefits of an ALA membership, go to: <https://ala.asn.au/why-join/>



**Adult Learning Australia**

# Government policy on adult education

With a federal election looming our Board members give their views on what the adult education priorities of the new government should be.



## Chris McCall

### Priority: A healthy and flourishing sector

One of the many strengths of ALA's Board is the diverse perspectives that members bring to the table, along with their extensive experience and commitment to adult education. With a fresh federal election ahead, we will be working hard to persuade our politicians of the importance of prioritising adult education as a way of improving life for individuals, communities, the economy and society as a whole.

We need to quantify the economic and social benefits of adult learning in ways that make sense to policy makers because a healthy and flourishing adult education sector is a sign of a healthy and flourishing society.



## Sue Howard

### Priority: Building ACE partnerships

Recently, I attended an Australian Library and Information Association Leadership and Innovation forum in Tasmania. It was really interesting to note how many connections there are between what both adult and community education (ACE) providers and libraries do. Both have strong commitments to supporting adults to access information, resources and skills they need for life and work. Both recognise that providing lifelong learning experiences is valuable, and both see themselves competing for limited funding. Of course there are differences too but I see some immediate options for each area to collaborate and improve benefits to individuals, community and society. Complementing and supplementing what each has to offer could expand opportunities for adult learners and provide them with real opportunities to learn skills for the future.



## Paul Mulrone

### Priority: The right to adult education

Everyone has the right to continue to learn. I believe that all citizens, regardless of age, should ideally continue to learn both for the love of learning and for necessity. There is a need for digital literacy and there is still a significant percentage of people who are not able to access, let alone navigate online information and services. So learning how to do this is pivotal to full participation in today's world. Simultaneously, however, I also believe that the right to learn for self-interest is essential to our wellbeing. This could be anything from cooking, music, a craft or some other physical, intellectual or practical activity. The federal government should be an enabler for such learning to occur and should demonstrate its support and interest in aiding the community of all ages, to continue to grow in every aspect of their lives.



## **Ros Bauer**

### **Priority: A fresh approach to adult literacy**

I would like to see a lifelong learning policy in Australia that includes an adult literacy strategy that prioritises language, literacy and numeracy in various contexts. Current government policy defines literacy as a defined set of skills that can be acquired through training and used for employment. Many Australians are ineligible for government funded adult literacy programs, such as older Australians even though they are increasingly expected to access government services online. To participate fully, Australians need to keep developing their literacy skills throughout their lives. An innovative adult literacy strategy would include a fresh approach to literacy and learning. Imagine harnessing the potential of baby boomers and retirees to upskill as literacy tutors, volunteering their time to other adults and rolling this model out nationally.



## **Richard Vinycomb**

### **Priority: Adult education for sustainability**

There is a big environmental elephant in the room – global warming. Many of my generation were worried about the threat of self destruction by nuclear war. We worked hard with peaceful protest to reduce that threat, even though it has not been totally removed. Grassroots education in all its forms plays a very important part in helping people understand complex issues and feel empowered to do something. It supports participative democracy whereby people can discuss and collectively ask serious questions, care about each other and our fellow beings, suggest and work on solutions. I believe education and taking action on climate change are interwoven. Well facilitated and holistic education can harness people's frustration and transform people who feel hopeless about the future into passionate and informed citizens empowered by hope. As educators, we all have to decide whether education for sustainability matters and work out ways of integrating it into the rest of our work as well as ensuring that is enshrined in government policy.



## **Robbie Lloyd**

### **Priority: ACE and mental health**

Evidence from the Mid North Coast of NSW shows undoubtedly that people who leave pathologising, expert-dominated clinical health settings and engage with adult and community education (ACE) activities get better faster and stay well longer. Joining adult education classes and activities removes stigma and helps people to recover and build new chapters in their lives. For example, this has been proven by community colleges all over NSW, where Learning and Life Development programs have kick started students' motivation, given them a new burst of energy and improved their health and wellbeing. Working with GPs and allied health clinicians, this approach has reduced the number of hospital and GPs visits, improved people's exercise and diet regimes, and reduced patterns of substance use. New government policies should invest in affirmative programs that make Health Departments form proactive partnerships with ACE providers in their areas, to reduce the drain on the Medicare budget and to achieve better quality of life outcomes for patients, carers and overworked clinicians.





## Catherine Dunn

### Priority: Revitalising adult and community education

I remember nostalgically the government-sponsored newspaper lift-outs listing hundreds upon hundreds of classes for 'night-school' that inspired me and lots of people I knew to take up a language, learn a trade, improve basic maths, you name it. For many of us, these classes were the first step back to work or a new career, or back into the community or a step to more formal education, or a transition to retirement.

Sadly, in WA at least, this broad government-led provision of classes for adults dried up about 20 years ago with the strong political imperative to concentrate on young learners heading into the workforce.

I would urge politicians to talk openly, widely, excitedly and inclusively about ACE and adult learning, bringing classes and learning opportunities into the conversation as much as football and cricket; funding and promoting new programs and opportunities and expanding our vision with TAFEs, universities, ACE, community centres and libraries all playing their part.

The wellbeing of the community and the individuals in it are enhanced by ACE and opportunities to learn together. ACE has struggled to survive on the smell of an old oily rag ... now is the time for governments at all levels to supply more oil.



## Donna Rooney

### Priority: Valuing learning

I would like to see learning in all its manifestations recognised as valuable. Among the examples I often use in my classes is of a group of quilters who meet in a neighbourhood centre each week. There are no teachers, no curriculum and no qualifications involved in these groups. Yet during an interview one of the quilters told me how her reading had improved because the other quilters chatted about the books they were reading. She explained how she had started to read more so that she could join in the conversations. So how might activities like quilting be understood by onlookers, by funding organisations and by government 'authorities' as education? A quilting group is unlikely to receive literacy funding and is more likely to be dismissed as a leisure activity. But this example, and there are many more, are timely reminders that learning is more than acquiring knowledge and skills, it can also be about becoming better, healthier, happier versions of ourselves.

# Facebook groups

Changes to Facebook means reaching followers of your Facebook page is harder than its ever been. Here's 10 reasons why not for profits are turning to Facebook groups.

## Tips and Trends



### 1 Increase visibility

Facebook's algorithm has changed to prioritise interactions between people so group posts are prioritised in user's feeds, and the visibility of page posts is on the decline.

### 2 More engagement

Groups are a great place to promote discussion. People participate and interact more in groups than they do with a page. Group members can get notifications about new posts, which tend to keep the discussions going.

### 3 Test ideas

Groups are a great place to test out ideas and gauge responses and save time on proposals that your community might not want.

### 4 Improve services

Using research from your group you can better understand what your community needs or wants from you and how to better tailor offerings to meet their needs.

### 5 Build community

In Facebook groups people interact not just with you but with others in the group so it's a great way to develop

From crime fiction to cooking, to business and neighbourhood networks there are Facebook groups for almost any interest you can think of. Whatever their size, small or large, successful groups have a clear purpose, established boundaries, guidelines that are enforced and a respectful and active community who share engaging content that interests them. They feel their group is their tribe.

stronger relationships with each other around a common purpose or interest. You can use Facebook groups to complement the face-to-face activities of your organisation.

### 6 Privacy controls

Facebook groups have multiple levels of privacy unlike pages which are public. Groups can be secret, closed or open. Secret groups don't show up in search results and while closed groups do show up, communication between members is only visible to members. Open groups are visible to everyone.

### 7 Build trust

You can screen potential members to those who meet certain criteria and set ground rules about what you can and can't post to create a safe and positive atmosphere.

### 8 More one-on-one interactions

This can happen on your page but in a group it's more personal and people are more willing to initiate and participate in discussion. This is particularly true if the group is closed, and people feel like their conversations are a little more private.

### 9 Save time

On one hand the role of group admin isn't as demanding as it can be on a page because group members can converse without you. On the other hand, you have to keep the group active and moderating a group can be demanding especially as it grows. It's a matter of weighing up the investment of time against the gains you make.

### 10 Enjoyment

A high functioning Facebook group where everyone enthusiastically shares ideas, tips, advice and posts, useful and entertaining content can be great fun as well as a great learning opportunity for everyone involved.

# ACE News

In **Victoria** the state government has announced funding for 27 neighbourhood houses, including the establishment of 16 new houses as part of a four year, \$28.1m program. Twelve of the 27 houses are in regional Victoria, including Bendigo, Ballarat, Sale, Nagambie, Charlton and Warrnambool.

State peak body **Neighbourhood Houses Victoria** has announced its 2019 annual conference from 8–10 May in the Yarra Valley. More details at [eventbrite.com.au/e/2018-nhvic-annual-general-meeting-tickets-50673677333](https://eventbrite.com.au/e/2018-nhvic-annual-general-meeting-tickets-50673677333)

In the **Northern Territory**, government plans to cut funding for adult education and axe 35 teaching jobs in Darwin have been reversed after a successful community campaign. NT Education Minister Selena Uibo announced a further three years of funding to support evening classes for adults at Casuarina Senior College.

In **Western Australia**, over 100 delegates attended Linkwest's REFRESH conference, a packed program of talking, connecting and collective recharging of batteries. Making the most of digital technology, regional members unable to attend in person were able to participate in the AGM as was international keynote speaker Cormac Russell from Ireland. Selected highlights are available here: [linkwest.asn.au/news-events/conference-2017](https://linkwest.asn.au/news-events/conference-2017)

In **Queensland**, 73 of the state's 124 neighbourhood centres across the state have been granted more than \$600,000 under the Palaszczuk Government's Thriving Queensland Communities Grants program to run events, deliver projects or purchase equipment. Queensland neighbourhood centres offer a range of services and support from playgroups and parenting programs, to housing and homelessness services, to education and training programs.



In **South Australia**, new CEO of peak body CCSA Kylie Ferguson presided over a successful Partnerships with Purpose conference. Kylie has an extensive record in social research, charity operations, training, planning, community work and management in Australia, the Philippines, Cambodia and Fiji. Most recently, Kylie managed 5 community centres for local government. Kylie has a deep commitment to social justice and facilitating meaningful relationships between people and the places that they live, work, recreate and connect in.

In **Tasmania**, peak body Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania has launched the Neighbourhood Houses Strategic Framework 'Achieving, Belonging, Celebrating, Doing – Community Development in Action' to guide the network of 35 Neighbourhood Houses around the state over the next five years. Find a copy at [dhhs.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/354301/180641\\_Neighbourhood\\_House\\_Strategic\\_Framework\\_wcag2.pdf](https://dhhs.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/354301/180641_Neighbourhood_House_Strategic_Framework_wcag2.pdf)

Photo: **Silos** by **Nomadic Pics** CC BY 2.0

# QUEST

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## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Jenny Macaffer

## EDITOR

Gina Perry

[g.perry@ala.asn.au](mailto:g.perry@ala.asn.au)

## 2018 ALA Executive and Board

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## CONTACT

 Adult Learning Australia  
Henderson House  
45 Moreland St.  
Footscray VIC 3011

 03 9689 8623

 [ala.asn.au](http://ala.asn.au)



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lifewide learning  
for all Australians*